

**Amendments to the Abstract:**

Please replace the Abstract on page 116 with the following:

A method for determining an unknown starting quantity of a target nucleic acid sequence in a test sample comprises ~~the steps of~~ amplifying the unknown starting quantity of the target nucleic acid sequence in the test sample and known starting quantities of a calibration nucleic acid sequence in respective calibration samples; and determining a respective threshold value for each of the nucleic acid sequences using a derivative of a growth curve derived for the sequence. The starting quantity of the target nucleic acid sequence in the test sample is determined using the threshold value determined for the target sequence and a calibration curve derived from the threshold values determined for the known starting quantities of the calibration nucleic acid sequences. ~~The invention also provides methods for determining a starting quantity of a nucleic acid sequence in a sample using quantitative internal controls or using internal standards.~~